

SHININGWORLD

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2016

HELLO, EVERYONE

from Sundari



THE LAST FEW few months have flown by, and in a few weeks I will be joining Ramji in Europe for the European teaching tour. We will be teaching in Belgium, Netherlands, Norway and England. I have loved my time in South Africa with my daughter and granddaughter, but am very much looking forward to being with my beloved again. James has closed up the Bend house and is on the East Coast for the last of the **U.S. 2016 seminars**, in Connecticut on September 16 to 18. ☸

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James leaving Bend, Oregon, for the US East Coast.

TROUT LAKE, A BIG SUCCESS!

ALTHOUGH I WAS unable to attend, I was told by many that the Trout Lake seminar was an event worthy of the great Vedantic tradition that has immeasurably blessed the lives of countless beings



since the beginning of time. We had the biggest crowd to date, about 70 people enjoying the teachings under the tall ponderosa pines. The first campout attracted only four people. ☸

TO HONOUR THE TEACHER IS TO HONOUR THE TEACHINGS

Sadaashiva samarambam

Shankaracharya madyaman

Asmad Acharya paryantam

Vande Guru paramam

Beginning with the limitless self,

With Shankaracharya in the middle

And my teacher at the end,

I worship the perennial teaching tradition of Advaita Vedanta.



IN THIS EDITION we honour those of you in the ShiningWorld community who have shared, are sharing and will share this great wisdom. Some of you who have been blessed with the gift of self-knowledge may feel reluctant to share it with others because you don't feel qualified to "teach," perhaps because you compare yourself to Ramji, but this should not be a consideration. Keeping in mind the *Bhagavad Gita's* statement, "Let not the wise unsettle the minds of the ignorant," which warns us not to proselytize but only to teach when the conditions are right, we honour those of you who, in your own way, are sharing this great knowledge with family and friends, not necessarily with precepts, but by the example of your happy lives. Nothing convinces others of the importance of self-knowledge and motivates them to seek it like the radiant happiness that shines in those who have been taught. ☸

MY INTRODUCTION TO TEACHING

FOR ME, TEACHING Vedanta was not something I foresaw in my wildest dreams. Having been a knowledge-seeker for much of my life, I had come to the place we all do before (or if) we are lucky enough to find Vedanta – the realization that there was no known teaching available which gives the whole picture. I knew enough to live a happy life, knew that the joy was not in the objects and there was nothing that could complete me or needed to. But how to dissolve the doer, for good? For that, only Vedanta does the job. I was graced with good *karma* and hit the jackpot, Vedanta and Ramji! How lucky can anyone be? To add to this incredible grace, *Isvara* brought Ramji and me together in non-dual love, another gift beyond measure, less expected than a trip to Mars.

However, *Isvara* has its ways and means to grind away the doer, as the saying goes, and was not to be thwarted. Resistance was futile. So here I am, five years into the most magical time with one of the greatest souls on this planet, our beloved Ramji. I am not sure what the previous *vasana* bundle that

made up the Isabella-person did to deserve all this, but thank you a million times, whoever you were and whatever it was!

I remember asking Ramji when love first started weaving its web around us, “Why does God need a girlfriend?” to which he answered, “Because God loves to love God.” How could I argue with that?! Here is my all-time favourite picture of us after we tied the legal knot last year... 🌸



NIDIDHYASANA, THE NAME OF THE GAME!

SELF-REALIZATION IS GOOD. Self-actualization is better. For *jiva* Isabella, this sudden change of circumstances did not come without its challenges. I was born one of eleven offspring, number 10. My mother, bless her soul, introduced us to strangers by number – who could blame her? One child is enough to cause considerable brain damage; I hate to think what eleven can do. As you can imagine, being number 10, so far down the pecking order, was not terribly auspicious, not life-threatening, mind you, but it had its challenges. To add to that, my father was not approved of by my mother’s snobby aristocratic family. So, being the free spirit he was (in his youth he had spent years in the North African desert riding camels with the French Foreign Legion), he hauled off his fledgling flock to deepest, darkest Africa to find fortune or misfortune, depending how you look at it. My family left Tanzania, East Africa, my birth country, in the early sixties after independence and emigrated to South Africa, courtesy of the white government which was looking for whites to bolster its apartheid regime. We were “wild and rough from the bush,” as they say.

My most memorable encounter with the world I was thrust into was sitting under my desk at the school I was forced to attend, refusing to speak to anyone – for a whole year. Up until that time, my only encounter with *jivas* other than my family was the black people who lived or worked with and for us. I only spoke Swahili and Italian; English was a truly foreign tongue. We lived many miles from the nearest neighbour, let alone town. Wild animals walked around our home. So, the Isabella program had to play itself out. Ah, yes, there is a story we all have to tell, about the *jiva*, if that is who we think we are. I appreciate *Isvara’s* sense of humour now. But back then it was rather obscure. For me, the wonder of it is that a wild little girl born in wildest Africa came to meet and love her soulmate, a famous American *mahatma* (himself a rather wild mountain man at heart), and now teaches Vedanta. *Isvara* is a wonder indeed! 🌸

SELF-REALIZATION, A LONG WAY FROM SELF-ACTUALIZATION

ALTHOUGH SELF-REALIZATION came quickly, being exposed to the rarefied atmosphere of a *mahatma* 24/7, as to be expected, there was still much work to be done to be free of the Isabella program. *Isvara* does not let up easily on this score, as we all know only too well! Ramji is the only person I know (there must be others, but I have not met them) who is truly, totally, 100% free of the *jiva* program. Many people who are close to us do not get this and see him only as a person who has realized the self, confusing *mithya* with *satya*. But there is no way to turn Ramji into James – trust me, I know! He has his way of pushing buttons you truly do not know you have, and he sometimes behaves in ways that seem very un-*mahatma*-ish. But as he is totally free of the person, he (never unkindly) uses his apparent-person program to ferret out all the hooks that linger and fester in that deep, dark unconscious part of his students' minds. ☸

NON-DUAL LOVE

NON-DUAL LOVE does not come easy. One of my favourite sayings regarding self-inquiry is “the steps to get ‘there’ are the qualities of being there.” What this means is that the means of knowledge (Vedanta) that takes us to the placeless place, where we know we are the knowledge and no longer need the means of knowledge, is one and the same thing. We will not be different when we “get there.” We will simply have the ability to discriminate between *satya* and *mithya*, permanently.

Taking a stand in awareness as awareness means taking a stand in our fullness, not in smallness. As long as I try to turn the “other” into “my” husband/wife/son/daughter, etc. and try to work things out with him or her on that level, I am keeping the concept of duality, smallness, limitation, alive. The *jiva* can never compete with the self, obviously. So, the *jiva* overcomes its smallness by living as the self and consciously dismissing the “voices of diminishment” as they arise. It does not try to defend them. To do so only gives them life. And arise they do! It is difficult at first, because you feel like a fraud trying to be something you are not. However, if we get hooked by the turbulent thoughts and emotional patterns inherent in being a *jiva*, even in seemingly small day-to-day issues, we will never be free of them. The ever-changing and limited idea of who you are trying to keep alive as the person is just a memory, a guilt-inspired thought, a toxic program. I say get rid of it; pay it no heed! ☸





DISMISS THE JIVA!

EVEN THOUGH I had realized the self and my knowledge was firm, my problem for a while was thinking that since the *jiva* never disappeared, it had to be catered to, as it was. It is true that the *jiva* remains even after the knowledge is firm as *Isvara* made it and, insofar as it exists, we must love it unconditionally. But *satya* AND *mithya* is duality if you think the *jiva* is as real as the self. Taking a stand as the self means the *jiva* is as good as non-existent as far as you, the self, are concerned. You are the self. You are not The Self and the *jiva*. So when *jiva* appears, dismiss it. This final realization only fully sank in recently, and what a tremendous relief it is to not take the *jiva* seriously.

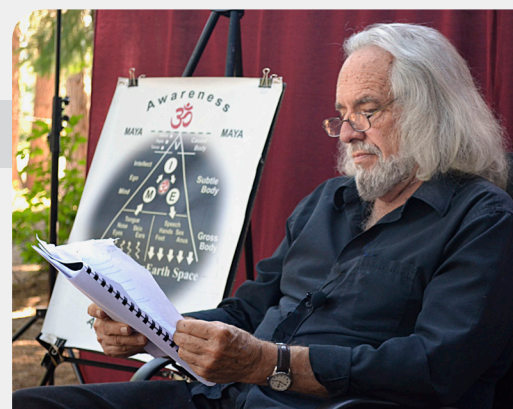
At the same time, *nididhyasana* never ends for the *jiva*. Self-actualization is not for the faint of heart, that is for sure! Facing the small, less-than-fabulous part of the psyche is not easy. It requires a great deal of courage to relate to the world as a *jiva*, and it takes even more courage to face the demons that await us in the causal body, so as to free ourselves of the *jiva*. When we do, we see the demons for what they are: just paper dragons. ☸

STEPPING UP TO THE PLATE

I SHARED A little bit of my story with you as a background to my *sadhana* and my introduction to teaching Vedanta. It was a big step for me to take up the mantle and follow in Ramji's footsteps, which seemed to be impossible, but somehow I found myself in this position; *Isvara* would not let me off the hook. I did my best as Ramji casually threw me in the deep end, quite sure that I could swim!

I had never studied Indian scriptures before. To be honest, it was quite terrifying. But Ramji was ever patient and magnanimous with me, as he is with everyone. He inspires the best in us because he sees only the best. He hoists us onto those very wide shoulders and makes us all very tall indeed. He never fails to encourage us and allow us to see the greatness of who we are, dismissing at the same time his own. He is humble to a fault, the embodiment of kindness and love.

It is said that the greatest teachers never let on that they are teaching you. They unfold the teaching in such a way as to make you feel like it is yours. Even though as teachers of Vedanta we all know the teaching does not belong to anyone, Ramji makes us all feel ever confident in our ability to teach. He is totally and utterly, unfailingly authentic in every way. He taught me all I know, and I will continue to learn from him, for as long as I am alive. ☸



Ramji, exemplifying the teacher of Vedanta, encouraged me to follow in his steps.

A MESSAGE FROM ANOTHER TEACHER

HERE IS A beautiful poem that captures so perfectly what the *jiva* has to endure to win freedom from the clutches of the causal body, written by Colleen-Joy Page, a friend of ours in Johannesburg, South Africa, who faithfully serves and shares the teachings in her own way. It evokes and reveals the courage it takes for the *jiva* to face the demons and live free of its conditioning.

TAKE A STAND

A writing on being human and willing to be awake...

The place no one wants to visit. The place no one wants to look. The darkest terror, that threatens to capsize the fragile mind and its theatre kingdom. The terror of insignificance wrapped in becoming nothing.

“Don’t take my crown,” cries the ego, as the slaughter of light lays waste the clinging.

Mothers to babes. Rich men to gold. Vanity to her curves, her pleasure trap of sex.

She is not always pretty, enlightenment. She is a ghost-maker. A throne-taker. A joker laughing in a hall of mirrors. And she will end you. I say let her. Let her throw back the veils of my heart, and tear the nails from their clinging to the vapours of life’s hollow promise.

You, who threaten me – you thief. You who hijack my nights with your Hollywood productions of hell in my head. Life, do your worst. Crush my heart with your grief-boot. Tear my guts open with your fear-razor. But know this, you cannot touch the real me.

This that knows itself in the eyes of all the beloved eyes, the touch of all skins, this that sings itself awake, for this love is a medicine that I will pay for.

Throw open these doors and let the storms rage on.

Take all you want from this little life, from the little child who lives in the echoes of this story.

I am willing. I am willing to bleed, to cry my eyes dry. To hurt. To live. I am willing to live. To live as this truth. To be both untouchable and crushable. To be mortal and boundless eternal truth.

Your price is steep. I am willing to pay.

Thank you, Colleen, for sharing these *Isvara*-inspired words with us. They are poignant and beautiful. ☸

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CORRECT METHODOLOGY

AS A TEACHER, what is becoming clearer to me by the day is the importance of the right words and a precise usage of the methodology. The basic message is simple: you are whole and complete, non-dual, actionless, unlimited, unchanging, ever-present, ordinary awareness. But unfolding the meaning is misleading without the traditional and mindful use of the right words. The language and methodology is as old as time and cannot be changed, if it is to work. It must be unfolded correctly, and the teacher must know the student's specific problem so as not to deliver unhelpful generic teachings. I can by no means claim to be flawless in my teaching, but I can say that every day *Isvara* refines my intellect a little more. I will never stop learning as a teacher.

I honour Vedanta, the greatest of all teachings. I honour my teacher, Ramji, and his teachers Chinmayananda, Abhedananda and Dayananda, on down the line forever. I give thanks and worship at the feet of all the great souls from the beginning of time who have ensured that this teaching remains with us. We are all so very blessed. I thank you all for the love and support that you have so generously given to me as Ramji's partner and as a teacher. My only wish is to continue serving *Isvara* to the best of my ability.

We honour all ShiningWorld teachers and all of you out there sharing this great knowledge in whatever way you can. ☸



Chinmayananda



Dayananda



Abhedananda

A MESSAGE FROM RAMJI ON TEACHING

IT IS NATURAL to want to teach this great knowledge once you have been taught. It is not enough, however, to teach with words, although Vedanta is a word-means of self-knowledge. Words are only as effective as the life of the teacher. He or she should be a fine example of the teaching: a kind, generous, humble, free person. At the same time, because the most effective way to learn is to teach, one should not wait to teach until he or she has become a saint.

To teach Vedanta properly, you should be versed in the scriptures. This does not mean that you should know Sanskrit and have been taught all the ancient texts, although it can't hurt, assuming your teacher has been taught properly. With the help of a few Sanskrit words, whose meaning anyone can learn, Vedanta works nicely in English because it is knowledge. Knowledge is beyond words, although the meaning of words, direct and implied, can deliver knowledge. Being versed in scripture means that

you know what the words mean. If you know what you, consciousness/existence, mean with reference to the objects that present themselves to you and you know in what way you and the objects are the same and in what way they are different, and you can reveal this knowledge to someone else or if you are willing to try, you are a teacher. Of course the more ways in which you understand the difference and the oneness, the more effective you will be communicating self-knowledge. So, to the degree that you expose yourself to the whole teaching, to that degree you will be an effective teacher.

Scripture, by its very definition, is an impersonal means of knowledge. We do not consider someone a teacher who only knows that they are limitless awareness, because personal experience does not transfer from one person to another. You do not experience what I experience, because experience is the result of *karma* and the experience of everyone is different owing to the fact that each of us is the product of a unique *karma* stream. I can talk about my experience, and perhaps you can get an idea of what I experience, but you will never experience what I experience as I experience it. Knowledge, on the other hand, is always present and is revealed when ignorance is removed. Vedanta removes self-ignorance. If you are miserable and I am happy, the only way I can transfer my experience of happiness to you is to reveal the fact that you are self, which is limitless bliss. I will not have transferred my experience into you, although it may seem as if I have, but I will have given you access to what we all experience always in the depth of our being. So we teach an impersonal means of knowledge that we have been taught by qualified teachers.

So how do we teach? Teaching is not prescriptive. We do not tell you what to do. We reveal the teaching, and if you have been paying attention you will have no choice about your actions; you will naturally follow the teachings because the logic compels you to do so. For instance, when you have been taught the logic of *karma yoga*, you will become a *karma yogi*. Of course all this assumes that you appreciate the value of the teaching.

Teaching is suggestive. Ramana Maharshi says: "Someone who tells you what to do is not a teacher." The teaching is the teacher. Then why do I need a teacher? Because it is not always clear to me what the teachings imply. So a good teacher offhandedly makes suggestions. Offhanded suggestions are not instructions. If the teacher is the boss, and you don't do what the boss says, you will be fired. But we do not fire you. We understand that you are dull or rebellious or suspicious and we let you figure it out on your own, which you will do if you have the desire required to set yourself free. This usually means that you will have to suffer certain unpleasant experiences until you get the message. *Isvara* in the form of the *dharma* field doesn't have a lot of tolerance for conceited, rebellious, dull and suspicious people.

You will get there on your own in the fullness of time, but why waste time? Why not pick up on the suggestions and implement them? After all, the teacher is *Isvara* too. There is a lot more to say on this topic, but this is just a newsletter about teaching, not a teaching manual. I wanted to mention this because sometimes very powerful, intelligent, willful inquirers want to figure it out on their own



James and Georg discussing following the teacher's suggestions. See the YouTube link to the right.

and set their own agendas. This is a dangerous path because ignorance has a way of keeping them ignorant, no matter how well-versed they are in selected teachings. Maybe you can't get a particular teaching because you have determined that you are not ready, but maybe the teacher sees something you don't and thinks you can. So you should not resist suggestions. Here is a [link to a short video](#) on the topic that Georg and I made a couple of weeks ago. We did it outside, so there is a bit of wind noise, but don't let that dissuade you; I think it will be helpful.

In any case, it is natural to want to share what you know, and I want to encourage you all to develop a teaching *vasana*, not just because it is helpful for others, but because teaching is the best way to discover what you know and what you don't know. I know when I first came to Vedanta I felt completely intimidated by the brilliance of my teacher. I wanted to teach like he taught, but I couldn't see it happening for a very long time, if ever. One day, out of the blue, he asked me to stand up in front of many people and talk about *karma yoga*. You may not believe it, but I was tongue-tied! People believe that enlightenment immediately qualifies you to teach, but they are wrong. Enlightenment inoculates you from the disease of *samsara*, the pull of objects – that is all.

Teaching is a skill that you develop little by little, not by looking for opportunities to teach, but by responding appropriately to the opportunities that *Isvara* provides. You don't have to be "enlightened" – whatever that means to you – to teach. You just need to be open to the idea of sharing what you know and, when the opportunity presents itself, allow *Isvara* to teach through you. You offer the words to *Isvara* in the *karma yoga* spirit and you tell people that you're not enlightened but that your life has been transformed by this teaching – that your worries have abated and that you are happy most of the time – and that you know that the teaching is responsible. And then you you share what you know and happily stop sharing as soon as you feel resistance. People resist the teaching for two reasons: they have had as much as they can assimilate or the teacher's ego is in the way.

A teacher should not expect the student to understand. Vedanta is completely counter-intuitive. Over forty years ago I went to two talks by J. Krishnamurti, one in India and one in the US, two years apart. And both times he became angry and berated the audience for not understanding! A recent example is the fallen *guru*, Andrew Cohen, a remarkably angry person. There is no excuse for anger. People are ready to hear or they aren't. You either have a teaching that makes perfect sense or you don't. If you have a perfect teaching and the student is not qualified, your anger is illegitimate – remember, the results of teaching are up to *Isvara*. And if you just teach your own ideas, it will not set anybody free,

because they are your own ideas. You may convince others that you are brilliant and spiritual, and that may solve certain problems for you, but teaching is not about you – it is for the sake of the student. You don't need anything, because you are either on the Vedanta bus or the bus is parked at the destination, in which case you have nothing to gain by teaching.

People want to know and they want to give you their trust. They will listen as long as they trust you. If you want respect or power or love or money, you will not be a good teacher, because your wants stand in stark contrast to the teaching itself. But if you are humble and reluctant and satisfied with the self and the teaching, you will be a good teacher. ❁



ISVARA, THE FIRST (AND ONLY) TEACHER

THE SCRIPTURES OF Vedanta are the words of *Ishvara*. But *Ishvara* teaches in other ways too. Here is a remarkable statement from one of our most interesting *satsangs* in years:

“One year later, still in the hospital, I experienced a second epiphany. It came out of the blue. This one seem to be totally controlled by some Force, and I had no chance to avoid it. My body was controlled by this Force like you describe in your epiphany at the post office. My understanding of who I was was not clear yet, so this epiphany was a bit strange. To the doctors it looked like a deep depression or a deep sleep, but for me I knew it was most likely a preparation for the next chapter for the journey. My body was totally unable to get out of bed, eat or speak for three months. Nurses came into the room to give me water, that is all.

“After three months a Voice arose from the spinal core of the body instrument. It was not human, but almost like a blending of the five senses: smell, speech, sound, touch and sight. It delivered wisdom. It started from behind the navel, arose upward and passed through the top of the head, and projected its teaching as if on a 360-degree screen. The body wasn't affected at all; it was unable to move. It allowed me to see the body from another angle, as if from the body of another person. I was within and without the body simultaneously. I was never scared, because it was very natural and I knew I was being taken care of.

“The Voice was the beginning of self-inquiry; it was Vedanta. It gave me an understanding of the empirical reality, the world of material objects. It showed me what moves and what doesn't. It showed me that I, as awareness, never move and that awareness is my natural presence and always free. It taught me that there are no real objects out there, but just the mind that reflects awareness and projects itself as many different forms of objects with many different names and aspects. I understood that when going from A to B in a car, for example, it isn't me that moves but it is the mind taking different forms as the body passes

objects that creates a feeling that I am moving. It taught me that objects arise and die in me, awareness.

“And this knowledge gave me an initial, not a complete, understanding of myself, of freedom. I knew firmly from this point on that it doesn’t matter if I lived locked in the prison section of the hospital ward, where I had been living without external freedom for so many years. It was very difficult for my *jiva* to be in this situation before this knowledge, because my diagnosis was false, but now, seven years later, I understand that I was actually there for spiritual growth and self-knowledge. But with this knowledge I felt that it was great to rest in peace in the hospital as an old man, in prison, as freedom. Beautiful. It was not a giving-up attitude, but a surrendering one.

“It seems *Isvara* had to teach me through epiphanies because no other option was available in hospital. No books, no internet, no information and no physical teacher. All the teachings came ‘from’ me and returned to me. The blessing of a physical teacher came later with you.

“Your formulation of the teaching was the key to getting really free as a person and clear about the knowledge of who I really am and my relationships to the objects that appear in me. The way you define and present the words produced great clarity. What an amazing knowledge it is! I could never have harvested enough from the epiphanies to get to the end of this journey with such ease.

“One year ago I was guided to Vedanta by a friend. I read your book *The Essence of Enlightenment*, and it set my mind free. Beautiful! I am so grateful. So I decided to live a dedicated life, with Vedanta as my teacher.”

The complete document, *Iron Bars Do Not a Prison Make*, is available by clicking this [link](#). 🌐

A POWERFUL MESSAGE FROM CHRISTIAN LEEBY



CHRISTIAN LEEBY IS one of those rare souls who has the ability to capture big concepts in very accessible, easy-to-understand language, without distorting the meaning. We are highly impressed with the way he has compressed the teachings on *nididhyasana* and mind control into such a succinct and concise teaching. Well done, Christian, way to go! In his own words, he received...

A CALL FROM ISVARA

It was 5:00 a.m. when the phone rang, waking me from my peaceful deep sleep. Assuming it was my wife, who was visiting her family in Argentina, I answered in a passive-aggressive tone that

expressed how annoyed I was to be woken so early: “Hello...?” When I heard a thick African accent reply with, “Yes, hello – who is this?” I thought, “Who the hell is this inconsiderate loser, calling this early, asking me who I am?” But before I could hang up, he said, “Is James there?” – which made me pause.

His name was Ade, and from his hospital bed, dying of colon cancer, he realized there was only one thing he wanted. It all sounded like another classic Nigerian scam until he revealed his desire – enlightenment. To my astonishment, this man had just googled “the direct path to self-realization” and somehow thought he was calling our beloved *mahatma*, James Swartz.

In a sweet, melodic, unassuming voice, Ade told me that his doctors had informed him he was days away from death. They wanted to do chemotherapy, which he had resisted. Still hoping to find an alternative therapy, he realized that all he really wanted was *moksa*, freedom, enlightenment. So he asked *Isvara*, in the form of Google, and somehow found my number.

With eyes tearing, heart gushing and my mind completely blown, I began unfolding the knowledge of Vedanta with which we have all been so incredibly blessed. He was the perfect student: quiet, contemplative and sincere. He followed along, quietly and respectfully adding “yes” or “I see” or “okay.” After 15 minutes or so, he said, “Thank you so much, Christian, it’s clear that you speak the truth for which I have searched my entire life. I am grateful to you and to James, and I will begin contemplating what you’ve explained immediately.”

I was shaken. His voice was so peaceful, his manner so gracious, I couldn’t quite understand this man. Concerned and feeling quite connected, I asked him about his condition. He answered honestly and unashamedly, but would not elaborate until I pressed him, which I did.

Eating was a problem for Ade, as it frequently caused gut infections, which would land him back in the hospital for days on end. He suffered horrible pain and had little relief, and had been in this condition for months. When I encouraged him to watch James’ videos, he kindly replied that he would do his best, but struggled with computers because he’s legally blind. Then he changed the subject, again, away from his own misery and back again to praising me for my generosity.

And then he said, “You know, Christian, I am not angry. I am not a victim. I harbor no blame. I am only grateful that I now have the time in my life to fully dedicate to this knowledge you have given me.”

We hung up the phone, I made sure I wasn’t dreaming and thought to myself, “What kind of mind does this man have? How is it possible?”

Ade was a flawless, untrained, natural *karma yogi*. *Karma yoga*, as taught by Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* and handed down to us through James’ clear discourses, addresses the one and only problem we face every day: thinking that what we are experiencing in life right now is NOT RIGHT.

James asks us: “Where do all of your emotional problems come from?” which inevitably sends us scurrying down the myriad rabbit holes of our past pains and wounds. But the past is not the problem. James says, “Emotional problems come when you are not getting what you want – that’s all.”

TEACH THE EXTROVERTED MIND

If you are a proper inquirer, you are a teacher. *Karma yoga* means catching an extroverted mind that's obsessed with painful thoughts from the past, in the form of "I want, I need, I don't have, I should have, this is not right," and walking it slowly and clearly through the logical truth of every experience we have. What is this logic?

1. Life is the giver and decider. As this person, this *jiva*, I am a receiver and an actor.
2. Every single thing known to me, including all the people I know, every life circumstance, my body, thoughts, motivations, supposed successes and creations, has been given to me.
3. Life, the giver and decider, is benevolent; I have always been taken care of. Life, the giver and decider, is intelligent; this creation is organized and consistent. Life, the giver and decider, is purposeful; every single aspect of this creation plays an important role.

LIFE IS MY FRIEND

4. Wanting and being attached to desired objects makes no sense, goes against the rules of creation and only creates pain and suffering for me. Only Life decides the results of my actions. I can trust Life because it is my friend.

5. Therefore my bitching and moaning is useless. Period. This pain I experience is a false movie projected by my mind, rooted in nothing more than habitual thoughts from my past. This false movie serves only to alienate me from the ever-unfolding grace that is my life and from the profound gratitude that is my birthright as this person I appear as.

Karma yoga transforms emotional pain into devotion and gratitude, and when that happens you feel better. As this person who constantly wakes up feeling separate in this world of apparently separate things, you relax into the truth that this person you appear to be is literally one with this amazing, impossible, beautiful creation.

You can never decide the results of your actions, you can only receive all that is given to you and do actions you choose.

Everything is always perfectly okay. Any circumstance you find yourself in that seems to be all wrong is in fact an amazing blessing. Receive it and rejoice.

If you appreciate the meaning of these words, consider that in the here and now a dying man named Ade, stuck in pain, under fluorescent lights in a sterile hospital bed, whom I unthinkingly cursed for waking me from my peaceful deep sleep and who has never had the grace or teachings, has more gratitude and appreciation than I do in my life of ease, health and privilege.

Karma yoga for those still searching, and *niddidhyasana* for those whose search is over, are, as James

says, “where the rubber meets the road.” It’s not about being a good person for others or society, although that is a benefit, it’s about owning your birthright: the peace, beauty, ease and contentment that you are, IN this apparent life AS this apparent person you seemingly appear to be, every day.

BENEFIT #1

If one day you find yourself in a horribly unfortunate situation, like my unexpected *guru* Ade, or bedeviled by the small annoyances of daily life, how do you want to go through it? As a depressed, resentful, scared victim – or as the beauty that you are? Being a perfect *karma yogi*, without even knowing the teachings, gave Ade a quality of life rarely experienced in such difficult circumstances. That’s benefit #1, enjoyment for the person regardless of life’s crazy ups and downs.

BENEFIT #2

And it also gave him benefit #2, the ability to assimilate the ultimate knowledge of himself, Vedanta, very, very quickly. In our subsequent conversations he never had one question, but only wanted to relish the beauty of all that is with me, his new friend.

Ade’s phone call came to me shortly after I visited my ocean of mercy, James, at his house in Bend, Oregon. On the last day of my visit, James nonchalantly said to me, “Christian, your search is over, but it pains me to see you living such a bumpy life. If you want a smoother ride, if you’d like to enjoy the fruits of your *moksa*, go home and continue the work that dispelled your ignorance and revealed your true nature. Every negative *vasana*, every limiting habit-thought you polish away, will give you more and more of your own beauty in your daily life. That is *nididhyasana*.”

If you’ve never spent time with James alone, it’s easy, casual, very ordinary. He is an absolute genius in every aspect of life, as far as I can tell, with one outstanding feature that makes him the pinnacle of teachers: he never tries to be a saint. He knows his *jiva*, the person he appears as, is simply *mithya*, impermanent, ultimately unreal and limited, and he never gives it any bother. That said, he has perfect *nididhyasana* and continues to polish his mind for his own enjoyment.

I can’t emphasize this enough, because most of us have burdened ourselves with “personal development” for years and years, thinking we had to make the person perfect to get our enlightenment. Much of it helped us drop some baggage here and there, but at the end of the day it came from self-judgment, not self-love, and further reinforced the insidious, destructive tendency to think of ourselves as incomplete.

James impeccably models an integration of three elements you should observe and emulate if you want both enlightenment and a beautiful daily life. He has a very serious attitude toward self-inquiry,

a responsible and vigilant managing of his *jiva*-mind for his own enjoyment and a complete tolerance for all the pissy little daily crap that's simply not worth bothering with.

He knows who is he. He continues to polish his mind, for nobody's sake but his own. And he doesn't give a shit about anything else, especially what anyone thinks about him. He perfectly models how serving yourself, for the sake of yourself, is the key to owning and enjoying your birthright and simultaneously serving the world around you.

I walked away from my visit stoked with a burning desire for *nididhyasana*, the intentional process of polishing my own mind for my own pleasure, not to make this person I appear as become perfect, but to make this person serve my true glory, in this life.

When I got home, I was abruptly awoken by Ade's call, and once it was over I thought, "What kind of mind does that man have, and how is it possible?" Ade was like a blazing flag, waving the truth of what James had taught me. He showed me that what I imagined possible in terms of polishing my mind to serve my beauty, regardless of any circumstance life put in front of me, was not even close to my actual potential.

NIDIDHYASANA ~ FREEDOM FOR THE APPARENT YOU

Freedom is freedom *from* the apparent you and freedom *for* the apparent you.

Some of you who have heard the teachings actually do know who you are, but think you don't because, for whatever reason, you believe thoughts like, "I don't know who I am," "when will my liberation happen?," etc. even though Vedanta clearly states that you are ever-free existence/consciousness. Perhaps you think you have good reasons for believing them, but you don't. The thought "I'm not free" only ever appears in the ever-free you. It is the only obstacle to the appreciation of your freedom. If you condition the mind to think the true thought "I am ever-free consciousness," your mind, your primary instrument for experience, will no longer obstruct your enjoyment of who you are.

If you still think you're searching for the enlightenment that you are, it's only the thought that you "don't get it yet" that stands between you and your realization. When you listen with full faith to the teachings of a qualified teacher, you are introducing new thoughts to your primary instrument, your mind, which is nothing more than reconditioning its current thoughts. James calls it "taking a stand in awareness as awareness."

There's no magic to Vedanta. It all boils down to owning your mind as your primary instrument and repeatedly and consistently reconditioning it with thoughts that are true. The method I'm sharing directly dispatches each individual disturbing thought while simultaneously conditioning a new one, thereby allowing you to literally master your mind.

I offer my profound gratitude to my self, the self, in the form of our amazing, ordinary Mahatmaji James Swartz, who mastered this method decades ago and silently teaches it with his every word, thought and deed. I am grateful to Sundari for her clear teachings on the *gunas*, which is the ultimate essence of this practice, to my unexpected *guru* Ade and to our lineage of clear thinking, straight talking sages that have come before us.

A RECOMMENDATION FROM US

If you already know who you are or if you are still not convinced that you are limitless, ever-present awareness, we highly recommend Christian's *karma yoga/nididhyasana* course. **Here is a link** that will get you started. ☸



SEMINARS IN 2016 AND EARLY 2017



JAMES' FALL EUROPEAN SEMINAR SCHEDULE

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| ▪ Belgium: | October 7 to 9, 2016 | Lovendagem | Ki Do Ma Trainings Loft |
| ▪ Netherlands: | October 14 to 16, 2016 | Amsterdam | Shiva Yoga Center |
| ▪ Norway: | October 2 to 23, 2016 | Stanglandsvegen | Sola Helsefarm |
| ▪ England: | October 28 to 30, 2016 | Reigate, Surrey | Yoga Ananda Holistic Centre |

For information, see the **Events pages** at *ShiningWorld.com*.

TWO SEMINARS IN GERMANY WITH TAN

For our German-speaking inquirers, we are happy to announce that Tan will be giving two one-day Vedanta seminars in German.

| | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| ▪ Germany: | October 29, 2016 | Berlin | <u>PDF flyer link</u> |
| ▪ Germany: | November 26, 2016 | Schondorf, Bavaria | <u>PDF flyer link</u> |

German-language website: **www.ShiningWorld.de**

English-language website: **www.ShiningWorld.com**

TWO MORE VEDANTA TREATS FOR GERMAN-SPEAKERS

■ **Germany:** January 1 to 6, 2017 Bad Meinberg Yoga Vidya



1. In January 2017, Vedamurti will give a Vedanta seminar in Bad Meinberg in German. It is part of an Advanced Yoga Teachers Training Seminar, which includes *yoga* classes and *satsangs*. People can book only the Vedanta part. The basis of the Vedanta portion is James' book *Die Wirklichkeit Verstehen*. [Here is the link.](#)



Vedamurti

2. Here is the [link to the German edition](#) of James' bestselling *The Essence of Enlightenment*. Don't miss it.

INDIA SEMINAR

■ **India:** January 5 to 28, 2017 Tiruvannamalai Sunshine Guest House

Arunachala ("red hill") at Tiruvannamalai, Tamil Nadu, India, is an important place for devotees of Ramana Maharshi, with Sri Ramana Maharshi Ashram at its foothills.



SOUTH AFRICA SEMINAR

■ **South Africa:** March 18 to 21, 2017 Cape Town The Forge

DAN, A TEACHER from South Africa, has organized a seminar for us in Cape Town in March. [Here is the link.](#)

IN BRAZIL, VEDANTA TEACHINGS IN PORTUGUESE AND ENGLISH

For great Vedanta teachings in Portuguese and English, contact Arlindo Moraes, aka Nagar:



Arlindo J.C. Moraes (Nagar)

LightOfVedanta.com

+55-12-997108177 (Vivo)

+55-15-991404000 (Claro)

Sao Paulo, Brazil ☸

TED SCHMIDT IS NOW A FULL-TIME VEDANTA TEACHER!

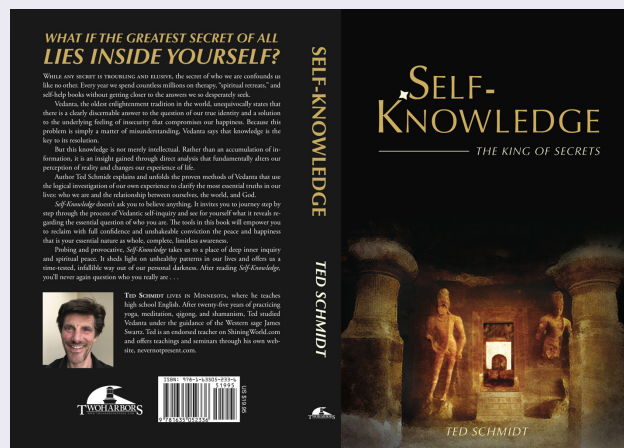
TED HAS OFFICIALLY resigned from his teaching post and is now a full-time Vedanta teacher. We will be posting his teaching events at the ShiningWorld website, but please make sure you visit his website, NeverNotPresent.com. If anyone would like to organize a seminar for Ted, please get in touch with him. He is a brilliant teacher, as most of you know.

INDIA SEMINAR

Ted will teach a two-week seminar in Tiruvannamalai at Sunshine Guest House immediately on the heels of Ramji's seminar. It will begin on Monday, January 30 and end on Friday, February 10. The registration fee is \$70 USD to pay for his expenses. The teaching is by donation. See the website for details. You can also pay at the door.

The text is Adi Shankara's *Sadhana Panchakam*. Though only five verses, it packs quite a wallop. It enumerates 40 items that constitute Vedic *sadhana*, or spiritual practice, describing step by step the stages of the spiritual journey, that begins with spiritual awakening and encompasses the entire process of self-inquiry that ultimately leads not only to self-realization, but the actualization of self-knowledge. Self actualization – perfect satisfaction with the self as the self – is achieved by *nididhyasana*, continuous contemplation of and meditation on the teachings in the context of one's daily life until the doer merges into consciousness.

Ted's book *Self-Knowledge: The King of Secrets* is available at this link. ☸





SATSANGS

RAMJI AND I have both posted our new batch of *satsangs*. My favourite is *No Prison for the Self*, a compilation of *satsangs* from the past year that I have been having with Wayne, a friend of ours in prison in Ireland. Ramji has also posted his recent *satsangs*. ☸

NEW VIDEOS

AS SHININGWORLD GROWS, we are reducing the prices of our videos and/or adding more teachings to to existing offerings.



THE ESSENCE OF VEDANTA: A NEW APPROACH

These inspiring videos of James teaching in the forest at the annual Trout Lake campout in August 2016 are a synthesis of the essential teachings on *karma/dharma*, self-knowledge/inquiry and love/devotion taken from three great Vedanta texts: *Bhagavad Gita*, *Panchadasi* and *The Yoga of Love* (Narada *Bhakti Sutras*). 25 hours, \$40.00. Get them [here](#).

NEW VEDANTA FULL SET

The bestselling *Vedanta Full Set*, which is all you need for an in-depth exploration of traditional Advaita Vedanta, has doubled in size. It now has 225 hours of pure Vedanta at the same price, \$150, which works out to 65 cents an hour! Get it [here](#). ☸

NEW IN THE MEDIA CENTER



We've added 8 new video/audio sets to the [Media Center](#), including *Panchadasi*, *Bhagavad Gita*, and the *Yoga of Love*.

[SUBSCRIBE](#)

MEDIA CENTER ~ NEW AUDIO FILES

THANKS TO GEORG, who organized the ShiningWorld video archives this summer, we found many interesting old videos that have not seen the light of day. We will inform you as they are added. However, we have recently added the *Bhagavad Gita* audio files from the

first seminar at Doro, in the Tichino Alps, five years ago, and the seminar in Rochester, England, three years ago. We also added 27 hours of questions and answers from the India seminar of 2012. ☸



OM TAT SAT